

Centralised Organ Donation Register system enhanced to facilitate public registration

The Department of Health (DH) today (July 3) launched enhanced features of the Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR) system to facilitate public registration for organ donations. People now can learn about their application results and check their registration status more conveniently.

Members of the public can apply for registration in the CODR by various means. Under the enhanced arrangements launched today, applicants who apply by post, by fax or online not using "iAM Smart" are required to provide the "Date of Issue" of their Hong Kong identity cards in the application form for speedier automatic checking, instead of having to wait for their identities to be verified through subsequent phone calls or emails as in the previous arrangements. For those who apply in person or online using the auto form-filling function of "iAM Smart", identity verification will continue to be completed during the application process. The enhanced system enables the applicant to be informed of whether the application is successful at the same time that an application to register in the CODR is submitted.

The "iAM Smart" application launched the "Centralised Organ Donation Register (Enquiry of Registration Status)" service in May, which enables the public to check their registration status in the CODR in a convenient way. The corresponding function is also incorporated into the enhanced CODR website. "iAM Smart" users can check their registration status with a few clicks on the CODR website using this newly added feature.

After a successful registration, a person's wish for organ donation will be recorded in the CODR, and they do not need to carry the Organ Donation Card with them. The DH appeals to members of the public who had signed Organ Donation Cards previously to register in the CODR.

A Government spokesperson said "All lives are priceless, and a cadaveric organ donation is an act of selfless dedication to rekindle others' lives. The spirit and mechanism of cadaveric organ donations in the medical profession of Hong Kong and around the world has all along hinged on two major principles, namely altruism and utilitarianism. Altruism is an act of unconditional giving, on a voluntary and pro bono basis. While decisions made by donors voluntarily and independently shall be given absolute respect, neither the donors nor their family members should expect any return from the decision made. On the other hand, the goal of utilitarianism shall be to maximise the overall good.

"The prevailing legislation and mechanism governing the donation, allocation, and transplantation of cadaveric organs in Hong Kong work on the above two major principles. The public can register in the CODR voluntarily to clearly indicate their wish. For those who have not registered in the

CODR, they may still donate their cadaveric organs to rekindle others' lives with the consent of their family members," the spokesperson added.

As at May 31, the CODR had recorded a cumulative total of 354 785 registrations. The DH had observed some abnormalities in the number of withdrawal applications received within a short period of time in May. In a short period of three days from May 22 to 24, the system received more than 28 000 withdrawal applications. However, subsequent verifications revealed that over 75 per cent of these applications (about 21 600) were not valid, including those from persons who have never registered in the CODR or those who failed to complete identity verification. In addition, according to investigations by the Police, some of the applications involved purposeful disruptive acts against the CODR, e.g. some applications were suspected to involve fraudulent use of others' personal data, or matching different names and Hong Kong identity card numbers in an attempt to make a withdrawal; or filling in irrelevant and insulting content, etc.

The Government spokesperson pointed out that the unusual disruption in May might have brought along withdrawals from some members of the public. Nonetheless, the DH noted that the number of withdrawal applications received in June dropped significantly when compared with that in May. Moreover, more than 5 000 applications to register in the CODR were recorded in each May and June, marking a record high in recent years, and the figures have more than doubled the monthly average numbers before the COVID-19 epidemic in 2019. The Health Bureau (HKB) and the DH value every registration and respect individual autonomy in decision making, and will actively step up promotion and education efforts in organ donation mechanisms and spirit. Members of the public are once again urged to keep supporting the selfless and generous act of organ donation in saving lives and not be misled by false information. They should hold fast to their original intention to save lives and protect the atmosphere in support of organ donations in Hong Kong over the years. The HKB will, in collaboration with the medical sector, continue to strengthen explanatory work so that members of the public can understand more about and support organ donation, thus bringing more hope to the dying patients.

The spokesman said that most people, upon learning their family members' wish to donate organs after death, are willing to honour such a wish. As such, it is very important to inform family members of the wish. Those who have already registered can also serve as a role model to garner support from their families and friends for this benevolent act and help spread the message to every corner of society.

For more information on organ donations, please visit the thematic website at: www.organdonation.gov.hk or the "Organ Donation at HK" Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/organdonationhk.